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United for Quality Care

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SEIU 1199NE  
Yvonne McCleese Otero  
Before the Human Services and  
Aging Committees

*In Support of* **SB 989 An Act Concerning Nursing Homes**

Good Afternoon Senator Lesser, Senator Hochadel, Representative Gilchrest, Representative Garibay, and members of the Human Services and Aging Committees. My name is Yvonne McCleese Otero, I live in New Haven, and I've worked as an Certified Nurses Assistant (CNA) at the Advanced Center for Nursing and Rehab in New Haven for 10 years. I come before you today in support of SB 989 An Act Concerning Nursing Homes.

While I have worked at the Advanced Center for Nursing and Rehab for 10 years, I have worked in the nursing home field for 15 years. As a CNA, we make sure all our residents' needs are met. This includes bathing, toileting, feeding, helping them walk and move around, and making sure they are hydrated. We keep residents company and provide them with friendship as well as direct care.

In our building we have residents of all backgrounds and walks of life. We have residents from other countries who teach us about their culture. It is a joy to get to know them and as you care for them, they become like family to you.

Unfortunately, short staffing has severely impacted our ability to provide the care our residents deserve. On a good day we have three CNAs to 30-40 residents. On bad days we have two CNAs to 40 residents. That is unacceptable. Management doesn't help in these instances either. They do not provide direct care to residents, and quite frankly we do not feel supported as staff.

Short staffing also prevents us from retaining the caregivers we can hire. I have been to many orientations recently and we have a lot of people attend and then never come back because the work is so challenging. The population we care for continues to change and become more acute. While we still care for elderly residents, we are also caring for people struggling with substance abuse, homelessness, and behavioral conditions. We do not receive additional training to care for these types of residents, which combined with short staffing only makes our jobs harder and more unmanageable.

Passing SB 989 would help caregivers like me dramatically. We need more staff and for management to be held responsible when they staff our homes improperly. This is the least

the state can do for residents and caregivers in nursing homes. Please do the right thing and pass SB 989.

Thank you.